



# THE DELL & CANNON

A Ransom Everglades School Publication

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## RE Students learn about benefits of IMPACT Testing

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## ImPACT Assembly Speech

David Goldstein

I can guess the thoughts some of you might have. Why are we having this assembly? Why are we learning about concussions? Why is David talking right now? Where'd all his hair from last year go? Well, I'm not going to spend time answering that last question, but I will answer the others. The reason we are having this assembly, as you may have already guessed, is to raise awareness about concussions. The better we understand concussions, the safer every one of us will be. The roots of my attachment to concussion prevention and management trace back to my own experiences with concussions and the lessons I took from those experiences.

As you may know, I am a soccer player. I've played the sport since I was four years old, and I love it. I have always been a defender, a fact that caused Arthur Deakin to say to me last week, "Wow, that's weird. Everyone always wants to play offense and score at some point." I don't play for the glory of goals, but rather for the satisfaction of shutting down the opposing team's forwards. My weapon of choice in soccer is my head, both in the tactical sense of knowledge of the game, and to pummel headers out of my side of the field. Since heading the ball was a strong suit of mine, it made sense that I always was looking for the opportunity to head the ball. This meant I increased my chances of being involved in a collision involving my head. My first concussion happened when I was playing soccer when I was twelve years old.

My second concussion happened when I was playing soccer two years ago. That concussion was a result of a head-to-head collision with another player when I went for a header. After this concussion, I made the decision to wear a protective headgear whenever I played soccer. I chose to use a headgear that only covered my forehead, rather than a full head headgear. I made this decision based on being self-conscious about looking ridiculous. I might have made a different decision if I had been under the supervision of a concussion expert. The lack of a full head headgear (that's a tongue twister!) came back to bite me last year in the District Final against Gulliver. As a freshman, I never would have expected to be playing in that game, but when one of our senior defenders hurt his knee, I was given the call to go in.

With about twenty minutes left in this ferocious contest, a ball floated towards me in the air; I jumped up for the header, which I knew I would win. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Gulliver's six foot four monster midfielder launching himself toward the ball and me. I met the ball first, but he followed through with his head, which knocked into the back of mine, just under my headgear. I was not knocked out, nor was I incoherent, so I played the rest of the game even though my head was hurt. Now that I have been well informed about concussions, I know that no one should ever keep playing after having a head trauma. I should have taken myself out and been evaluated by someone certified and trained. After the game, the first thing I did was to find my parents and tell them that something was wrong. I told them that my head was blaring with pain. When we got home, we realized we had a

problem. I had a club soccer practice the next morning. My club coach would have been furious that I couldn't play for him because I was injured in a school game. We made a decision that may have caused me months of additional pain, to play soccer the day after my head trauma without consulting a doctor. Right after my club practice the next day, I hurried to the car and collapsed because of the pain. My family and I then realized, of course too late, that I might have suffered another concussion the previous night, my third in four years. We began to consult various doctors; some advised me to never play soccer again. This possibility crushed me, as I couldn't imagine life without the sport that I loved. My headaches continued for over 3 months. I felt so sick that I spent a couple of periods a day sleeping in the training room under the care of Nurse Gerrard. After suffering for so long, I eventually found Dr. Nedd and Dr. Hotz at the University of Miami Sports Medicine Clinic. With their expertise and care, my pain went away, and I hope to play Ransom soccer this winter. Their management of my concussion was essential to my recovery.

At my first meeting with Dr. Hotz and Dr. Nedd, they told me that they were going to put me through something that was called the ImPACT Test. I had heard about the ImPACT Test before -- unbelievably, I got this latest concussion while writing a biology paper on the use of technology in managing concussions -- and wanted to see what it was like. After taking it, I realized how easy it was and how it could be of help to me. They also made me realize that all of the activity that I had been doing (Speech and Debate tournament, Math Team tournament, and so forth, on top of demanding school work) wasn't good for my health. If I had been under their care earlier, my situation would have been a lot better. They also explained the source of my headaches and prescribed medication that was very beneficial.

In the following days, I began to think about my situation. I felt it was necessary to turn my negative experience into a positive for others. I thought about how my concussion was affecting me. I made the decision that I didn't want anyone else to suffer the way I did. I didn't want kids to have concussions and not know where to turn as had happened to me at first. I also wanted people to feel safer playing sports, for sports is my passion and I want to share it with others. Then, I had a Brain Blast (as I was writing this, my Dad asked me if this was meant to be a pun: Brain Blast - concussion. I then explained to him that it was from Jimmy Neutron). My Brain Blast was as follows: what if I asked Dr. Hotz to bring ImPACT testing to Ransom?

I followed through with this idea, and Dr. Hotz was ecstatic that someone wanted to solve the problem that she spends every day working on. I brought the idea up to Coach Grubair, and we arranged for Dr. Hotz to give a presentation about ImPACT. After her presentation, everyone who was there agreed that we owed Ransom Everglades students a safer sports environment.

Sometime during the conversation, I mentioned the possibility of spreading the testing to other schools. I felt the more student-athletes we could help, the better off our community would be.

Coach Grubair approved of the idea and pointed out that we should try to spread ImpACT testing at these schools and at Ransom to as many sports as possible because concussions are prevalent in sports such as sailing and volleyball, not just in football as everyone thinks. This year, we will be the first school in Miami to ImpACT test all of its high school athletes. He also said Ransom would sponsor a public school that wouldn't be able to afford the licensing. This idea eventually snowballed into a goal: to raise enough money to provide ImpACT testing for every public school in Miami-Dade County and to raise money for concussion research.

I began to work with The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, the amazing research center driven by Marc Buontoconti, who is an unbelievable inspiration. And now, after months of hard work, Countywide Concussion Care is here. With the assistance of the KiDZ Neuroscience Center, which is part of The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis and the UHealth Sports Medicine Center at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, the time has come to accomplish our mission. To do so, we will be having a Countywide Concussion Care Drawing here at Ransom Everglades. Each of you can have a role in helping students like us in our community by participating.

The basic details of the Drawing are as follows: the Drawing will start Thursday and end October 5. Packs of five tickets will be made available in class meetings on Thursday. You can sell these tickets to people you know, or you can buy them yourself. Each ticket is ten dollars. On October 5th, the winning tickets will be drawn, and the winners will be announced. There are amazing prizes for the winners, but there are also amazing prizes for the people who sell the most tickets. Prizes include Royal Caribbean cruises, tickets to see the new-look Miami Heat, and Apple gift cards. The first two hundred students to sell five tickets will receive a cool limited edition Ransom Everglades tee shirt. More information about the Drawing will be given out in class meetings Thursday. I urge each one of you to take part in the Drawing. If each of you sells just five tickets, we will raise over \$30,000 that will go towards the cost of ImpACT testing for the 36 public high schools with athletics in Miami-Dade County and support the work of the concussion program at UM. This will benefit high schoolers just like you, and if you are lucky enough or dedicated enough, you could win awesome prizes.

To conclude, there are several people I would like to thank for making the Countywide Concussion Care effort possible. Dr. Hotz, you have healed me, guided me, worked with me, and helped me. Thank you for all of the time you have spent to better my health and this project. To Mrs. Sayfie Aagaard of The Miami Project, thank you so much for showing me how to get things done and how to turn an idea into reality. Marc, thank you so much for gracing us with your presence at this assembly, for all the amazing work you have done, and for supporting Countywide Concussion Care. Ms. Mocerri, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to bring my project to Ransom. Mr. Ferguson, thank you for your time and advice, which have been instrumental in the development of this project. Mr. Cramp, I cannot adequately describe the extent of your positive

impact (no pun intended) and helpfulness. I hope this project does justice to the time and work that you put into it. Coach Grubair and Mo, your commitment to protecting the student-athletes of our school and our local community was a driving force behind the idea of this project.

Thank you to Nurse Gerrard, who looked out for me when I was in pain. Thank you to my teachers from last year who were so understanding and supportive of my situation. So, my parents didn't want me to thank them because they thought that it would take too much time and sound like a Bar Mitzvah speech, but there was no way I was going to make this speech without thanking my family. Thank you Mom, Dad, and Julie. I love you, and thank you for helping me with this project. Thank you so very much to everyone else who has been of such great help.

Now we will move on to Questions and Answers. Marc, Dr. Hotz, and I will be more than willing to answer questions that you may have. The one request that I will make is that the questions should not be about the Drawing. Information about it will be distributed during class meetings Thursday, and this time should be used in a more productive manner than just asking about tickets, prizes, and such.

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## International Photography Award



*To see more of Matt's work, please go to the Image Gallery at [www.photoawards.com](http://www.photoawards.com).*

**Matt Stock**, Director of Photography in RE's Fine Arts Department, was selected as an Honorable Mention in the 2010 International Photography Awards for the architectural subcategory of "Professional Historic" images for his series on Stiltsville. This year's entries spanned 103 countries worldwide with approximately 15,000 submissions and only 2% of those submissions were given awards.

Each house was photographed at night from the surrounding water and for the first time photographed utilizing the highly specialized technique of "painting with light." Over the course of three hours light was added into individual exposures using hand held flashlights and layered together to create the final effect seen in each image.